assistance in this regard. Our Ambassador in Saudi Arabia met the Governor of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia where Al Khobar is located and received assurances of cooperation with regard to safety of Indian nationals. Further more Indians are not targeted so far in any Arab country.

H-1B visa cap imposed by U.S.

426. SHRIMATI N.P. DURGA : Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of H-1B visa cap imposed by US for IT companies;

(b) whether after the end of the period of H-1B visa, pending applications for Green Card, H-1B visa holder would allowed to stay in US and work;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the number of software professional who has entered USA on H-1B visas during the last three years, year-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) The Government of U.S.A. has imposed a cap of 65,000 jobs for IT companies. 50,000 visas have been granted and would join after 1 October, 2004. Remaining 15,000 visas are in process.

(b) and (c) H-1B visa holders would be allowed to stay in U.S.A. only if their labour certification application is approved by the State or labour certification was filed one year prior to expiry of H-1B visa. In late cases extension will be granted for one year each time until labour department finally clears the application.

(d) In 2001, 2002 and 2003 approximately 2,50,000 Indian IT professionals entered in U.S.A. The year-wise break up is not available with the Government of India.

Talks with Pakistan on massacre in Kashmir

427. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have raised the question of massacres of innocent persons near line of control in Kashmir in recent talks with External Affairs Minister of Pakistan; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and whether any assurance has been given by External Affairs Minister of Pakistan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) and (b) Government have made it clear to Pakistan that to take forward and sustain the dialogue process, violence, terrorism and hostility must be prevented.

In the Joint Press Statement of January 6, 2004, President Musharraf reassured the Prime Minister of India that he will not permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner.

The Foreign Secretary level talks between India and Pakistan were held in New Delhi on June 27-28, 2004. Recalling the reassurance contained in the Joint Press Statement of January 6, 2004 the two Foreign Secretaries exchanged views on carrying the process forward in an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence.

Militants Training Camps

428. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ULFA and other North Eastern militants training camps uprooted in Bhutan have approached China/Bangladesh for shelter;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the steps taken by Government to dissuade China/Bangladesh for providing shelters to these militant groups; and

(d) China's response in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) There have been reports in the media that ULFA, KLO and other North Eastern militant groups have sought shelter in Bangladesh and China following the counter insurgency operations launched by the Royal Bhutan Army.

(c) This was brought to the attention of the Embassy of People's Republic of China in New Delhi with a request to the Government of People's Republic of China to take appropriate action. The matter was also raised with Bangladesh during the DG level BSF BDR talks in January, 2004. The cooperation of the Bangladesh authorities was sought